

I. ORGANIZING AND STAFFING FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

During the last five to ten years, the Central Alabama Region has experienced many significant changes, including both population growth and decline within the region, economic adjustments, and changes in local leadership. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) process is an opportunity for Central Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (CARPDC) to address economic development on a regional basis rather than just county by county. Using this regional approach will allow us to address many of the economic changes that have occurred in a comprehensive manner as well as foster cooperation and coordination among the governments, agencies, businesses and special interest groups represented by our region.

This CEDS is the first step in initiating a regional approach to economic development. Until recently, economic development planning in Autauga, Elmore and Montgomery Counties had been sporadic and fragmented and in some cases non existent. Further, there has never been a coordinated effort to address economic development on a regional basis in this area where the population growth and employment commuting patterns are so intertwined. While many economic development initiatives for Montgomery County are carried out through CARPDC, the City of Montgomery and Montgomery County are a part of the South Central Alabama Development Commission's (SCADC) Economic Development District (EDD). This EDD also includes Bullock, Butler, Crenshaw, Lowndes, Macon and Pike Counties, but does not include Autauga or Elmore Counties. Because long range economic development plans for both the City of Montgomery and Montgomery County have far reaching impacts on the entire region it is important that CARPDC and SCADC work together to implement the long range goals and objectives for their regions and their member governments. Through a review of the changes occurring in the region, it became fundamentally clear that it is time to increase and coordinate planning efforts for the Central Alabama Region's economic future.

During the development of the Central Alabama Region CEDS, three regional public meetings were held to review conditions and determine issues throughout the region. Local issues were also brought to the table during these regional meetings, which included citizens, business leaders and elected officials from all three counties.

The results of the public meetings have enabled the CARPDC to formulate an initial plan of action to address economic development from a regional perspective that is conducive to local growth. The CEDS is just the beginning of the regional economic initiative. During 2006 and 2007, the Central Alabama Region CEDS Committee will continue to update the CEDS as additional data is released and more detailed economic development plans are developed.

CEDS Strategy Committee

As part of the 2006 CEDS Update a new Strategy Committee is being formed. This Strategy Committee will act as the principal facilitator of the economic development planning and implementation process, and will be responsible for developing, updating, replacing or amending a goal or strategy. The proposed Committee represents all major interests of the region thereby taking advantage of local skills and resources in program formulation and implementation, and ensuring that all viewpoints are considered. The Committee will include representatives of local governments, business, industry, finance, agriculture, labor, utilities, education, community organizations, public health agencies, the elderly, disabled, the unemployed, underemployed, racial or ethnic minorities, and women. A preliminary list of the proposed Committee members is attached as Exhibit A.

After formation of the Strategy Committee, roles will be defined and relationships with existing local, regional, and state institutions will be established. A clear understanding of these different roles and relationships at the outset will avoid conflicts and establish positive working relationships for implementing the development process.

Staff Support

The Strategy Committee will have the full support and cooperation of the staff of CARPDC in carrying out the day-to-day functions required to ensure success of the process. These functions may include, but are not limited to, collecting and analyzing information on the area's economy, identifying strategy options, and preparing detailed implementation plans. The Committee should ensure, through coordination with CARPDC leadership, that adequate staff resources are available to perform these functions.

Committee Work Program

The first functions of the Strategy Committee will be to develop a work program to provide the Committee with an agenda for carrying out its duties, establish its bylaws and adopt the CEDS. The work program should describe tasks to be performed, identify the individual, organization, or work group responsible for completing each task, and establishes timetables.

For the process to succeed, the Committee should take advantage of technical and financial assistance available from public and private sources. These sources include Federal, state, and local governments, foundations, educational institutions, local organizations, and major corporations. Under their planning, technical assistance, or economic adjustment programs, Economic Development Administration (EDA) support may be used to help organize or carry out the CEDS, and for updating or refining strategies.

II. ANALYSIS: WHERE ARE WE?

A. Demographic & Socioeconomic Characteristics

Population

The population of the region grew by 12 percent from 1990 to 2000, but only showed a 1 percent increase from 2000 to 2005. Montgomery County experienced a 1 percent reduction in population during the period from 2000-2005; however Autauga and Elmore Counties both showed an increase in population of 10 and 11 percent respectively for the same period. In 2000, 11 percent of the region's population was 65 years of age and over. Autauga County had the lowest percent of population 65 years of age and over (10 percent); Montgomery County had the highest (12 percent). Also in 2000, the region's racial mix was 57 percent white and 39 percent black.

County	Total Population by County				
	Population			% Change	
	1990	2000	2005	1990-2000	2000-2005
Autauga	34,222	43,671	48,612	22%	10%
Elmore	49,210	65,874	73,937	25%	11%
Montgomery	209,085	223,510	221,619	6%	-1%
Total	292,517	333,055	344,168	12%	3%

Source: US Census Bureau

Hispanic Population Growth

The Hispanic population in the Region increased by 52 percent between 1990 and 2000. Montgomery County's Hispanic population showed the largest increase from 1,624 in 1990 to 2,665 in 2000, an increase of 61 percent. During the same period, Autauga and Elmore Counties showed very similar increases with 38 and 34 percent respectively. As nationwide trends suggest these totals will continue to rise, and with the growth in our Spanish speaking population, the demand for bilingual employees in the workplace, schools, businesses, and services will likewise increase.

Migration Trends

In-migration from outside the region is occurring primarily in Autauga and Elmore Counties. More significantly are the in-migration changes within the region, particularly movement from the City of Montgomery to the more rural and small town environments of Autauga and Elmore counties. Factors that influence migration the most include perceptions of local public school systems, rising median household and disposable income, the increased availability of retail conveniences, and the desire for a more rural or "small town" atmosphere. The implications of

these migration trends include continued sprawl, the rising need of urban redevelopment, and the much-needed improvement - both real and perceived - of urban public school systems.

Population Increases

Both Autauga and Elmore counties experienced an increase in population from 2000 to 2005, while Montgomery County experienced a slight decrease. The implications and complications that arise from these population increases include strains and demands on city services; additional and improved infrastructure needs (water and sewer); additional public school facilities, space and teachers; demands for similar retail conveniences and municipal amenities (parks, trails); and increased demands on public safety services. The increase in population also provides an increase in the county and municipal tax bases and the potential for a more vibrant local economy.

Median Age

From 1990 to 2000 the fastest growing age group in the region was that of persons 85+ years of age, at 27.4 percent, nearly 2.5 times the rate of any other age group except the 45-64 group. The 45-64 age group has increased 25.6 percent from 1990 to 2000. The population is growing older, household size continues to decrease, families are having fewer children, and the baby boomer population (born between 1946 to 1964) is reaching 60 years of age. The consequences of the region's aging population include demands on the Medicare system and Social Security; health care systems and providers, nursing homes and assisted living facilities. It will also increase the demand for recreation activities for retirees, and could contribute to an increase in tourism activities. Additionally, because the population is staying healthier into their later years the desire for alternative living environments that cater to active seniors will be increasingly in demand.

Employment

Employment opportunities have been increasing in the region. The unemployment rate has been relatively stable over the past couple of years. Major employers include State, county, and municipal as well as Federal government; three regional universities, and a number of major manufacturing enterprises.

Households and Families

The number of households in the region increased from 105,531 in 1990 to 124,738 in 2000. Family households with no husband present increased by 20 percent from 1990 to 2000.

Poverty

There were an estimated 51,343 people in poverty in the region in 2003, a 25 percent increase from 38,630 in 2000. In 2000, 11.6 percent of the region's population was in poverty. The range throughout the region was a low of 7.4 percent in Elmore County and a high of 13.5

percent for Montgomery County. This compares to 12.4 percent for the United States and 16.1 percent for the State of Alabama.

In 2003 there were 6.0 percent of children under the age of 17 living in poverty in the region. Montgomery County had the highest number (26.8 percent) and Autauga County had the lowest (15.2 percent). This compares to the national rate of 17.6 percent and the state's rate of 22.3 percent.

2003 Poverty & Median Income Estimates							
	All Ages		Ages 0-17		Ages 5-17		Median Household Income
	Poverty Estimate	Percent	Poverty Estimate	Percent	Poverty Estimate	Percent	
United States	35,861,170	12.5	12,865,806	17.6	8,399,573	16.1	43,318
Alabama	676,417	15.2	243,154	22.3	165,225	21.0	36,131
Autauga	4,938	10.4	1,902	15.2	1,353	14.4	44,194
Elmore	8,301	12.5	3,140	18.0	2,144	16.9	42,630
Montgomery	38,104	18.0	15,125	26.8	10,241	25.9	35,523
Total/Average	51,343	15.3*	20,167	6.0*	13,738	4.1*	40,782
Source: CBER							
*Percentages based on an estimated regional population for 2003 of 333,734							

Educational Attainment

Of the region's 2000 population 25 years of age and older 27.7 percent were high school graduates, which reflects no significant change from the 1990 figures. Approximately 6 percent had less than a ninth-grade education in 2000 as compared to 10 percent in 1990. Additionally, 14.6 percent finished over 9th grade but did not obtain a high school diploma in 2000 as compared to 17 percent in 1990.

In 2000, 22.4 percent have had some college but no degree and 5.1 percent had an associate degree, as compared to 19.3 and 5.3 percent respectively for the same figures in 1990. Those with a bachelor degree in 2000 were up 2.1 percent over the 1990 figures to 15.4 percent; those with a master's degree increased to 9.5 percent in 2000 up from the 7.9 percent reflected in 1990.

Note: Census Figures reflect a population of 180,051 in 1990, and 210,451 in 2000, at 25 years of age and older.

Educational Attainment

County	Less than 9th Grade			9th - 12th Grade (no diploma)			HS Graduates (includes equivalency)		
	1990	2000	2005*	1990	2000	2005*	1990	2000	2005*
Autauga	2,438 <i>13.89%</i>	1,588 <i>12.52%</i>		3,814 <i>12.33%</i>	4,284 <i>13.92%</i>		6,671 <i>13.42%</i>	9,332 <i>16.00%</i>	
Elmore	3,578 <i>20.39%</i>	2,740 <i>21.60%</i>		6,940 <i>22.43%</i>	6,939 <i>22.55%</i>		10,188 <i>20.50%</i>	14,576 <i>24.99%</i>	
Montgomery	11,527 <i>65.71%</i>	8,357 <i>65.88%</i>		20,186 <i>65.24%</i>	19,548 <i>63.53%</i>		32,844 <i>66.08%</i>	34,410 <i>59.00%</i>	
Region Total	17,543	12,685		30,940	30,771		49,703	58,318	

County	Some college (no degree)			Associate Degree		
	1990	2000	2005*	1990	2000	2005*
Autauga	3,973 <i>11.41%</i>	6,024 <i>12.78%</i>		939 <i>9.87%</i>	1,389 <i>12.89%</i>	
Elmore	5,064 <i>14.54%</i>	9,528 <i>20.22%</i>		1,631 <i>17.14%</i>	2,221 <i>20.61%</i>	
Montgomery	25,787 <i>74.05%</i>	31,568 <i>66.99%</i>		6,946 <i>72.99%</i>	7,165 <i>66.50%</i>	
Region Total	34,824	47,120		9,516	10,775	

County	Bachelor Degree			Masters Degree & Higher		
	1990	2000	2005*	1990	2000	2005*
Autauga	2,064 <i>8.64%</i>	3,245 <i>10.01%</i>		962 <i>6.75%</i>	1,727 <i>8.63%</i>	
Elmore	2,488 <i>10.42%</i>	4,567 <i>14.08%</i>		1,543 <i>10.83%</i>	2,606 <i>13.03%</i>	
Montgomery	19,335 <i>80.94%</i>	24,620 <i>75.91%</i>		11,740 <i>82.41%</i>	15,674 <i>78.34%</i>	
Region Total	23,887	32,432		14,245	20,007	

Source: US Census -- Educational Attainment Universe = Persons 25 years and over

Percentages are of Region Totals

**2005 Figures were not available for all counties in region – these numbers will be added when information becomes available*

Public School Enrollment and Dropout Rate

Enrollment in the region's city and county school systems (K-12) was 1.3 percent lower in the 2004-2005 school year than 1999-2000. Total enrollment was 52,183 in 2004-2005. Dropout rates in the region's school systems declined 21.5 percent from 14.95 in 2000 to 11.73 in 2004. Elmore County experienced the greatest decline (29.1 percent) in dropout rates during the same period.

County	Public School 4-YR Projected Dropout Rate			
	2000	2004	Change	% Change
Autauga	16.5%	17.24%	.74	4.3%
Elmore	18.79%	13.33%	-5.46	-29.1%
Montgomery	9.56%	4.62%	-4.94	-52.0%
Total	14.95	11.73	-3.22	-21.5%

Source: Alabama State Department of Education

Vital Statistics

Birth and death rates shown below are per thousand of population. Average death rate in 2001 for the region was 8.2; in 2004 it increased to 8.7. Death rates in the region in 2004 ranged from a low of 7.9 in Autauga County to 9.2 in Montgomery County. Both Elmore and Montgomery counties experienced an increase in death rates from 2001 to 2004, while Autauga County experienced a slight decrease.

Birth rates averaged for the region in 2001 were 14.5; in 2004 it decreased to 13.9. Birth rates in the region in 2004 ranged from a low of 13.3 in Elmore County to a high of 14.7 for Montgomery County.

County	Death Rate			Birth Rate		
	2001	2003	2004	2001	2003	2004
Autauga	8.1	8.6	7.9	14.3	13.5	13.8
Elmore	7.4	8.9	8.9	14.0	13.2	13.3
Montgomery	9.1	9.1	9.2	15.2	14.4	14.7
Averages	8.2	8.9	8.7	14.5	13.7	13.9

Source: Alabama Department of Public Health

Crime

Of the 20,363 crimes reported in the region in 2004, 4,873 cases (23.9 percent) were burglary, 12,281 cases (60.3 percent) were theft (larceny), and 1,481 cases (7.2 percent) were auto theft. Violent crimes (8.4 percent) were 29 homicides, 142 rapes, 735 robberies, and 822 assaults.

The 20,363 crimes reported in 2004 represent an increase only of 2.0 percent over crimes reported in 2001.

	2004 Arrest Data Statistics by County								
	Population	Index (Total)	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Assault	Burglary	Theft	Auto
Autauga	46,752	1,836	0	11	39	107	376	1,215	88
	<i>Per 100,000</i>	<i>3,927.10</i>	<i>.00</i>	<i>23.52</i>	<i>83.41</i>	<i>228.86</i>	<i>804.24</i>	<i>2,598.81</i>	<i>188.2</i>
Elmore	69,976	2,302	3	13	51	98	523	1,553	61
	<i>Per 100,000</i>	<i>3,289.69</i>	<i>4.28</i>	<i>18.57</i>	<i>72.88</i>	<i>140.04</i>	<i>747.39</i>	<i>2,219.33</i>	<i>87.17</i>
Montgomery	223,432	16,225	26	118	645	617	3,974	9,513	1,332
	<i>Per 100,000</i>	<i>7,261.72</i>	<i>11.64</i>	<i>52.81</i>	<i>288.68</i>	<i>276.15</i>	<i>1,778.62</i>	<i>4,257.67</i>	<i>596.15</i>
Totals	340,160	20,363	29	142	735	822	4,873	12,281	1,481
	<i>Per 100,000</i>	<i>5,986.30</i>	<i>8.53</i>	<i>41.75</i>	<i>216.07</i>	<i>241.65</i>	<i>1,432.56</i>	<i>3,610.36</i>	<i>435.38</i>
Source: Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center									

Labor Force and Unemployment

The region's labor force was 156,703 strong in 2000 with an unemployment rate of 5.9 percent. Montgomery County had the highest unemployment at 4.0 percent with Autauga County showing 3.1 percent and Elmore County with the lowest at 2.9 percent.

Employment

Total employment in 2004 (full-time and part-time) stood at 210,397, up 2.85 percent from the 2000 level of 204,403. Those private sectors showing a decline in employment include: Agriculture services, forestry, fishing; Manufacturing; Transportation and Public Utilities; Wholesale Trade; and Retail Trade. The region's employment by economic sector continues to shift towards service producing sectors, with significant increases in Services sector (23%) and a slight (1%) increase in the Finance, Insurance and Real Estate Sector.

Total Regional Full-Time and Part-Time Employment			
	1990	2000	2004
Total full-time and part-time employment	167,982	204,403	210,397
Wage and salary employment	147,,883	176,991	177,869
Proprietors' employment	20,099	27,412	32,528
Farm proprietors' employment	1,877	1,827	1,689
Non-farm proprietors' employment	18,222	25,585	30,839
Farm employment	2,591	2,129	2,035
Non-farm employment	165,391	202,274	208,362
Private employment	124,628	158,938	163,391
Ag. Services, forestry, fishing, & other	1,259	2,254	374
Mining	299	225	228
Construction	9,486	11,766	12,535
Manufacturing	18,127	18,763	16,553
Transportation and public utilities	6,320	8,717	6,539
Information			3,040
Wholesale trade	8,616	8,965	7,201
Retail trade	26,220	33,601	22,695
Finance, insurance, and real estate	12,121	15,887	16,012
Services	42,180	58,445	76,297
Government and government enterprises	40,763	43,336	44,971
Federal, civilian	7,335	7,158	6,484
Military	7,362	6,642	6,247
State and local	26,066	29,536	32,240
State	15,382	16,733	18,691
Local	10,684	12,803	13,549

Source: US Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2004

Law Enforcement Employment

There were a total of 783 sworn police and county law enforcement personnel in 2001, 700 male and 83 female. City police departments had 584 officers, sheriffs' departments had 165 officers, and colleges and universities had 34. The percentage of female sworn personnel was highest among the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department (17%); region wide, the percent female was 10.6 percent. Not included in these law enforcement personnel tabulations are other state and federal law enforcement personnel (Alabama Beverage Control, Capitol Police, Alabama state troopers, Conservation & Marine police, and other special agencies).

Average Wage per Job

Average wage per job in the region was up 3 percent to \$34,255 in 2004 from \$33,400 in 2001. The 2004 average was 70 percent of the National average and 83 percent of the State's average.

	Average Wage per Job				
	2001	2003	2004	% National Average 2004	% State Average 2004
Autauga	25,117	26,165	27,186	70%	83%
Elmore	23,816	27,274	28,186	73%	86%
Montgomery	30,404	33,400	34,255	88%	105%
Source: CBER					

Income

Per capita income (PCI) average for the region was \$24,454 in 2000 and \$28,043 in 2005, an increase of 13 percent. Elmore County had the lowest PCI in 2005 (\$25,578) and Montgomery County had the highest (\$32,325).

	Per Capita Income				
	1990	2000	2005	Change '00 - '05	% Change '00-'05
Autauga	14,959	23,018	26,228	3,210	12%
Elmore	14,488	23,089	25,578	2,489	10%
Montgomery	18,505	27,256	32,325	5,069	16%
Total/Average	15,984	24,454	28,043	3,589	13%

Source: U. S. Census

B. Geographic, Climatic, Environmental & Natural Resources

The Central Alabama Region is located in two physiographic regions: the Coastal Plains and the Piedmont Province. Montgomery and Autauga Counties and the southern part of Elmore County lie in the Coastal Plains, while the north and northeastern portions of Elmore County are in the Piedmont Province, containing the foothills of the Appalachian Mountain Range. In general, the land in the three-county region is level to gently rolling. Elevations range from less than 200 feet above sea level along the Alabama River to a high point of 746 feet above sea level near the Seman community in Elmore County.

There are three major drainage basins in the Central Alabama Region. The majority of Autauga and Montgomery Counties and the southwest tip of Elmore County drain into the Alabama River. The eastern half of Elmore County drains into the Coosa River, while the western half of Elmore County and northeastern Montgomery County drain into the Tallapoosa River. Additionally, the southernmost portion of Montgomery County drains into the Conecuh River. Expansive flood plains are generally present in the low level areas along the three rivers and along the large creeks and streams in the region.

Autauga County has, in addition to the Alabama River, which forms its boundary with Lowndes and Montgomery Counties, a number of significantly large creeks including Autauga Creek, Mulberry Creek, Little Mulberry Creek, and Swift Creek. The largest of these, Autauga Creek, runs through the City of Prattville. Most of these creeks run from the higher terrain in the north almost due south or southeast to flow into the Alabama River. There are no major impoundments in Autauga County, but there are a number of small dams forming backwater lakes, plus a number of lakes fed by creeks and ground water springs. There are two large man-made impoundments located in Elmore County: Lake Jordan and Lake Martin. Lake Jordan, north of Jordan and Bouldin Dams on the Coosa River, covers 4,480 acres, all of which is in Elmore County. Lake Martin, above Martin Dam on the Tallapoosa River, has 11,000 acres of water, extending from northeast Elmore County into Tallapoosa County. Two other dams on the Tallapoosa River are Thurlow Dam at Tallassee and Yates Dam, just north of Tallassee. Elmore County has approximately 1,700 acres of fish ponds, plus a number of smaller watering ponds. Montgomery County has no large lakes, but, in addition to the Alabama River, has more than 6,000 acres of water area in stocked fish ponds and ponds suitable for livestock and crop irrigation.

The four major soil areas in the region are: (1) the Piedmont Plateau, covering the northeastern portion of Elmore County; (2) the Upper Coastal Plains, covering the remainder of Elmore County, all of Autauga County and the northern portion of Montgomery County; (3) the Black Belt, covering the central half of Montgomery County; and (4) the Clay Hills, covering the lower third of Montgomery County. Soils in the Piedmont Plateau are well suited for timber production and grazing crops for cattle production. The Upper Coastal Plains are composed of ridge tops, hilly slopes and small stream bottoms. The ridge tops, which usually have sandy loam soils, are suitable for row crops as are some of the stream bottoms. The hilly slopes are well adapted to pasture and timber production. The Black Belt soils are suitable for pastures since they are heavy, difficult to work, and require heavy machinery. These soils can be worked only at optimum moisture content; they are doughy when moist and tend to clod when too dry. The Clay Hills soil is generally hilly and used largely for timber and range land. Where level, these soils are well adapted for the production of row crops.

Mineral deposits are relatively slight in the Central Alabama Region. There are no coal deposits and the only deposits of any significance are limestone, sand, gravel and clays.

Air Quality.

Pollutant Standards Index. As shown by the data below, the Central Alabama Region has an excellent air quality rating.

2000 PSI Report				
County	#Days With PSI	Percent of Days when Air Quality Was:		
		Good	Moderate	Unhealthy
Autauga	No Data Available			
Elmore	241	53	47	0
Montgomery	265	54	46	<1

Source: Alabama Department of Public Health

Greenspace. The entire Central Alabama Region is blessed with abundant natural resources which provide many opportunities for greenspace development along rivers, creeks, lakes and other natural features. Through ongoing comprehensive planning processes in the region, there are numerous efforts and initiatives throughout the region to address the potential and opportunities for expansion and linking new and existing Greenspace.

Recreation. Montgomery County has an ambitious and aggressive parks development program which compliments the City of Montgomery's on going development of the riverfront for recreational and entertainment activities. These programs will provide citizens with ample opportunities for leisure activities. A project in Montgomery County still in the planning stages, but worth mentioning here, is the Catoma Creek Environmental Park and Learning Center to be located on 1,250 acres of Alabama Department of Transportation mitigation property. This project will provide a regional facility for leisure, hiking, environmental research and education which will provide yet another economic catalyst for the County. Autauga County is not aggressively pursuing recreation development; however the cities of Autaugaville, Billingsley and Prattville all have recreation programs to serve their citizens. Although Elmore County likewise has no formal recreation development program the comprehensive planning process which they are currently undergoing will establish goals and objectives to implement such a program. In 2003 a Regional Trail Connector Plan was developed for the three county region and several of the counties surrounding them. The abundance of forest land in the region provides many opportunities for hiking, biking, fishing, and hunting. The Trail of Legends Association (TOLA) is responsible for the development and maintenance of several of these activities and is exploring future possibilities.

Waterways. The Central Alabama Region is surrounded by and encompasses many waterways and bodies. The Alabama River borders Autauga County on the south and Montgomery County on the north. The Tallapoosa River borders Montgomery County on the North and Elmore County on the south and east and the Coosa River run through the northwest corner of Elmore County. Additionally, both the Jordan Lake Reservoir and a major portion of Lake Martin are located in Elmore County.

C. Regional Infrastructure

Transportation

Central Alabama's location, accessibility and proximity to Interstate 65 and Interstate 85, as well as several U.S. Highways are distinct advantages to the area. The regional transportation system has enabled the Montgomery metropolitan area to grow and serve the outlying communities with relative ease. While the interstate and regional transportation system is beneficial to the area, vehicular congestion on these routes is now becoming a deterrent for future economic growth. The Central Alabama Region does not have a regional transportation system of any sort; and, rural and mass transportation systems are severely deficient to serve the needs of the citizens, particularly the elderly population. Specifically, the Central Alabama Region needs a major transportation connection between the three counties in the form of a loop road or regional bypass, and the improvement and expansion of state highways between the counties and to the surrounding counties, including State Highway 14, U.S. Highway 31, U.S. Highway 231 and U.S. Highway 82. Additionally, improvements to the existing commercial and regional airports are needed to maintain economic viability.

At the local level, road paving and maintenance is a problem in Autauga and Elmore Counties, while Montgomery County has very few unpaved roads. Road paving will benefit the outlying areas in terms of accessibility and commuting to local job centers. There are few alternatives to vehicular transportation in the region, although citizens of Elmore County have developed and are slowly constructing a system of multi-use trails throughout the county. There is a need for pedestrian and bicycle facilities in all parts of the region. This need is driven by citizen demand and the need to eliminate user conflicts and hazards as more and more bicyclists and pedestrians are forced to use roadways.

Transportation modes, including air & rail

The Central Alabama Region is regionally accessible by vehicle via Interstates 65 and 85 and U.S. Highways 31, 80, 82, 231, and 331, as well as a number of state highways. There is little accessibility, however, within and around the region. While Alabama Highway 14 provides an east-west corridor across the south central portions of Autauga and Elmore Counties, access to the northern parts of these counties and to the southern part of Montgomery County is limited to county roads.

Portions of Autauga, Elmore and Montgomery Counties are under the jurisdiction of the Montgomery Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO determines the transportation needs of certain areas of these counties. In the remaining portions of the region, transportation planning is carried out by the county commissions, municipal governments, the Division Engineer of the Alabama Department of Transportation, and the main office of the Alabama Department of Transportation in Montgomery.

The location of the Alabama River and Coosa River in the region provides shipping access by barge to the Montgomery area where State docks are located on the Alabama River and north to Wetumpka on the Coosa River. Shipping is also available to the central portion of the region by rail from CSX Transportation, whose major connection between Birmingham and Montgomery passes through western Elmore County near Coosada and Millbrook. There is one commercial airport, Montgomery Regional Airport, which serves the area and three smaller airports located in Prattville, southwest Elmore County and Tallassee.

Water

There are presently 23 public water systems serving Central Alabama. Municipal water service is provided by Autaugaville, Eclectic, Millbrook, Montgomery, Prattville, Tallassee and Wetumpka. The remainder of the systems are independent water authorities. Combined, these systems provide quality water to over 90 percent of all households in the region. These systems supply a combined average of 6,011,452 gallons per day (GPD). During peak demand these systems can provide up to 138,263,400 GPD. The majority of the residents in the region are served with potable water; however, there remain pockets within each of the three counties where water service has not yet been extended.

Sewer

Public sewer is provided through seven municipal waste water systems: Autaugaville, Eclectic, Millbrook, Montgomery, Prattville, Tallassee, and Wetumpka. The Town of Coosada currently has sewer lines to serve a portion of the town. An intergovernmental agreement with the City of Millbrook once provided sanitary sewer treatment service for the Coosada system; however that agreement has recently been withdrawn and Coosada's elected leaders will soon need to look into the alternatives for expanding and maintaining sewer service for their municipality. While sanitary sewer service is available in most of the incorporated areas, very little sewer service has been extended outside of municipal boundaries. Residents in the unincorporated areas are dependent upon septic tanks and a few private lagoon systems. There are a number of areas within the three-county region that have a high water table or where the soil does not perc well. In these areas the use of septic systems is difficult, at best, and at times can be a health hazard.

Communications

The region has a number of communications providers; in addition to Bellsouth Communications the region is also served by Alltel, Verizon and a local ISP in Tallassee "Tallassee Communications. Large investments have been made by major telecommunications companies such as Bellsouth in the Montgomery area's telecommunications technology network, including digital switching, fiber optics, etc.

Energy distribution

Electrical power and gas are abundantly available in the region. Alabama Power Company has five dams in Elmore County located on the Coosa and Tallapoosa River. Besides Alabama Power Company, electricity is also provided by the Central Alabama Electric Cooperative and

the Dixie Electric Cooperative. Natural gas is available through Southern Natural Gas and is distributed by the Alabama Gas Corporation, South East Gas Corporation and the City of Tallassee. Gas services are available in most of the municipalities and by various private propane providers in the rural areas of the region.

D. Economic Characteristics

Housing: Age, Occupancy, Ownership, and Telephone Penetration

According to the U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000, there are 138,832 total housing units in the Central Alabama Region. At 69 percent, the majority of the housing units by far are found in Montgomery County and most of those are inside the corporate limits of the City of Montgomery. The number of housing units in the region has increased by 19 percent since 1990. Although Montgomery County has the greatest volume of housing units in the region, Autauga and Elmore Counties have experienced significantly greater housing growth in the last ten years. Between 1990 and 2000, there was an increase in housing units of 39 percent in Autauga County and 32 percent in Elmore County, while Montgomery County experienced only a 13 percent increase.

Housing Units By Location, 2000					
Location	# Units	Location	# Units	Location	# Units
Autauga County	17,662	Elmore County	25,733	Montgomery County	95,437
Autaugaville	384	Coosada	529	Montgomery	86,787
Billingsley	58	Deatsville	150	Pike Road	114
Prattville	9,562	Eclectic	459		
		Elmore	88		
		Millbrook	3,897		
		Tallassee	2,367		
		Wetumpka	2,139		
<i>Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000</i>					

Between 1990 and 2000, housing vacancy increased throughout the Central Alabama Region. Of the total housing units in the region, 90 percent were occupied in 2000. Of the 10 percent of the vacant housing units, 1 percent is for seasonal use, leaving the region with a 2000 housing vacancy rate of approximately 9 percent. The 2000 housing vacancy rate is a slight increase from the 1990 housing vacancy rate of 8.2 percent. In 2000, housing vacancy was highest in Montgomery County, at 9.5 percent, and lowest in Elmore County at 8.0 percent. Elmore County also has the highest number of seasonal or vacation housing units, due to the presence of Lake Martin and Lake Jordan. In 1990, Autauga County had the lowest housing vacancy rate of 6.5 percent, compared to Elmore County at 8.2 percent and Montgomery County at 8.5 percent.

Housing in the Central Alabama Region, 1990 and 2000				
2000				
	Central Alabama Region	Autauga County	Elmore County	Montgomery County
Total Housing Units	138,832	17,662	25,733	95,437
Occupied Housing Units	124,808	16,003	22,737	86,068
Owner Occupied Housing Units	86,559	12,929	18,493	55,137
Renter Occupied Housing Units	38,249	3,074	4,244	30,931
Vacant Housing Units	14,024	1,659	2,996	9,369
For Seasonal Use	1,433	158	945	330
1990				
	Central Alabama Region	Autauga County	Elmore County	Montgomery County
Total Housing Units	116,754	12,732	19,497	84,525
Occupied Housing Units	105,531	11,826	16,532	77,173
Owner Occupied Housing Units	70,774	9,422	13,282	48,070
Renter Occupied Housing Units	34,757	2,404	3,250	29,103
Vacant Housing Units	11,223	906	2,965	7,352
For Seasonal Use	1,638	78	1,372	188
<i>Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990 and 2000</i>				

The total number of housing units in the region increased by 15.9 percent to 138,832 units from the year 1990 to 2000. Autauga County had the largest increase (27.9 %) in housing units from 1990 to 2000 followed by Elmore with a 24.2 percent increase in the same time period. Montgomery County experienced the smallest increase (11.4 %) from 1990 to 2000. The average owner-occupancy rate for the region in 2000 was 61 percent with Montgomery County having the lowest owner-occupancy rate (57%) and Autauga County having the highest owner-occupancy rate (74%).

Of the total occupied housing units in the region, 97.3 percent had landline telephone connections in 2000.

Industrial Activity: International Trade and Foreign Ownership

In 2000, there were 318 manufacturing firms in the region with approximately 11 of them having foreign ownership. Those involved in international trade totaled 117; of those 41 were importers and 76 exporters. High technology firms numbered approximately 26.

Manufacturing. While textile manufacturing has been declining in the region automotive and other high technology firms have been on the rise with the addition of Hyundai Motors of Alabama and the many tier one and tier two suppliers that have come to the region on its heels. As in other areas of the Country the Central Alabama region continues to experience a shift to a more service and retail-based economy.

Business Incubators. There are only two (2) business incubators in the region, one in Montgomery and the other in Tallassee. These facilities are home to many local businesses and have been the jumping off point for several of the Hyundai suppliers mentioned above.

Economic Clusters. The automotive industry is expected to continue its growth as a result of the recent Hyundai plant location in Montgomery County and the resulting suppliers which provide a combined employment of approximately 7000. The aerospace industry is another large employer in the region with GKN having plants in both Montgomery and Tallassee. Additionally, because Montgomery is the center of State government for Alabama, State and Federal agencies are another very large employer for the region.

Tourism, Arts & Culture. The City of Montgomery, in Montgomery County, is a primary center for arts and entertainment in the region and is home to such attractions as the Alabama Shakespeare Festival, the Blount Museum of Fine Art, the State Capitol, historic Old Alabama Town, and the first White House of the Confederacy, Civil Rights Museum, and the Rosa Parks Museum among many others. Autauga County is home to the RTJ Capitol Hill regional golf course, host to the LPGA, which is located in Prattville which is also home to a recently renovated historic downtown shopping. Elmore County and its many municipalities boast natural beauty second to none in the State, with rivers, lakes and woodlands to provide for fishing, hunting, boating and a wide array of other outdoor activities. One of the newest additions to this feast of nature is LANARK a once private home which was donated to the Alabama Wildlife Federation and is now open to the public for viewing of the beautifully landscaped grounds and soon to be home of a conference and learning center. The County also has many small historic municipalities with a wide variety of shopping and dinning opportunities.

Economic Output

Regional economic output - the value of goods and services produced in the region - rose from \$4.9 billion in 1990 to \$6.9 billion in 2000 when expressed in constant 1996 dollars. This is a significant 28.3 percent increase. Output rose in all sectors. Of the major economic sectors, Agricultural Services experienced the largest increase at 51.7 percent; followed by Financial Services with a 45.8 percent increase and Communications with a 40.7 percent increase. The smallest increases occurred in Nondurable goods at 4.1 percent and Durable goods at 6.2 percent.

Total Value of Goods & Services Produced (Real Output) in thousands of 1996 dollars				
Autauga, Elmore, and Montgomery Counties	1990	2000	Change 1990 - 2000	% Change 1990 - 2000
Ag. services, forestry, fishing, & other	20,237	41,864	21,627	51.7
Mining	4,517	6,602	2,085	31.6
Construction	272,272	366,434	94,162	25.7
Manufacturing	556,626	684,303	127,677	18.7
Durable goods	345,616	368,244	22,628	6.2
Nondurable goods	202,010	210,598	8,588	4.1
Transportation and public utilities	218,502	315,606	97,104	30.8
Communications	56,166	94,692	38,526	40.7
Wholesale trade	259,216	343,528	84,312	24.5
Retail trade	386,204	542,461	156,257	28.8
Finance, insurance, and real estate	276,741	510,457	233,716	45.8
Services	964,222	1,602,270	638,048	39.8
Government and government enterprises	1,392,449	1,837,107	444,658	24.2

Source: CBER

Tax Liability

The region's state income tax, sales tax, fuel tax, and lodging tax totaled \$167.0 million in 1990 and \$291.0 million in 2000. The income tax component is the largest and grew by 54 percent to \$137.8 million. The sales tax contribution was \$69.6 million in 1990, just \$5.4 million less than the income tax, but rose 40 percent to \$115.1 million. Fuel tax in 2000 was at \$35.9 million was 42 percent more than in 1990. Lodging tax is the smallest component but it nearly doubled from \$1.2 million to \$1.9 million.

Taxable Retail Sales

Taxable retail sales totaled \$3.03 billion in 2000 which translates into \$10,562 per person. The top categories of sales include automotive (\$591,895), general merchandise (\$477,105); food (\$451,591), and eating places (\$287,346).

Medicaid & Medicare

Medicare enrollment in the region totaled 45,392 in 2000. Of these, 37,223 were elderly and 8,199 were disabled.

Medicaid benefit payments totaled \$150.2 million for 52,930 eligible. This translates into an average of \$2,838 per eligible or \$400 per capita.

Licensed Physicians, Nurses, and Dentists

The availability of health professionals in an area is often quoted as a rate, which is the number of said professionals per ten thousand of population. In 2000, there were 1,412 physicians for a rate of 42 in this region and 146 dentists for a rate of 4.4. There were 3,258 registered nurses giving a rate of 97.8 and there were 1013 licensed practical nurses for a rate of 30.

Hospital Beds & Nursing Homes

There were 15 nursing homes in 2001 with 1,715 beds. The number of beds is equivalent to 45 beds per thousand of the 65 years and older population in the region. Admissions and discharges for the year were 2,708 and 2,761, respectively. Patient days totaled 592,610 for an average daily count of 1,625 and a 94.8 percent occupancy rate. The region had 7 hospitals with a total of 1,323 beds in 2000. There were almost 50,630 admissions for 163,528 patient days at an average expenditure of \$1482 per patient day.

E. SWOT ANALYSIS

The following represents the list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) that was generated through the three public involvement meetings held as part of the CEDS process.

STRENGTHS:

- Location
- Transportation Network
- Rivers
- Water Quality/Supply
- Education Resources
- Recreation
- Proximity to State Government
- Available Land
- Military Bases
- Diversity in Area
- Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail
- RSA Investment
- Tourism Opportunities
- Strong Existing Industry
- Reliable Energy Supply
- Education Public/Private
- Alabama Wildlife Federation
- Historic Assets
- Strong Workforce
- Arts & Culture (Shakespeare Festival)
- Affordable Housing
- Medical Care
- Prison System

WEAKNESSES:

- Under-employment/Lack of Labor Force
- Need for Vocational Training
- Literacy Rate
- Public Education
- Loss of Agricultural Property to Development
- Access to Medical Care
- Need for Re-training for New Jobs
- Highway 14 (needs to be widened)
- Not Pro-active in Planning
- I-65 Corridor
- Drug Screening Failure
- Lack of Work Ethic

- Level of “under-class” Population

OPPORTUNITIES:

- I-65 Corridor
- Tourism
- Consolidation of Water & Sewer Systems
- Recreation
- Improvements to Transportation System
 - Rural
 - Airport (Elmore County)
- Improve Turf War Issues
 - Cities
 - Utilities
- Better Use of Educational Resources
- Improve Education
- Improve Vocational Education
- 2-Year College
- Better Management of Resources
- Development & Use of Comprehensive Plans
- Partnerships
- Work Force Development
- Develop International Relationships
- Improve Work Force Standards
- Support the State’s efforts with Black Belt Counties
- Improve Funding
- Alabama, Coosa & Tallapoosa Rivers
- Medical – Baptist UAB
- Improve or Develop New Fairgrounds
- Gambling
- Marketing of Region
- Improve Public Transportation
 - Senior
 - Work Force
 - Medical
- Work on Family Values
- Finding Funding Resources other than Grants
- Base Closure Issues – Redevelopment (Planning)

THREATS:

- Unplanned Growth
- Flight of Industry
- Decrease in Diversity
- Lack of Cooperation among Governments/Turf Wars
- Gambling, Illegal Aliens
- Lack of Public Safety

- Loss of Quality of Life – Planning
- Needs of Aging Population
- Funding (lack of)
- Sanitary Sewer, lack of
- Migration to other Counties
- Prison System
- Lack of Workforce
- State Effort to Build Black Belt Counties
- Base Closures

F. Partners and Resources for Economic Development

The following important actors in the region include organizations, businesses, or individuals that represent important issues, including those unfamiliar to the economic development organization such as workforce development, social service delivery, and natural resources. Many of these organizations may also be an important source of support and funding for regional development activities.

Economic Development Organizations & Chambers:

Elmore County Economic Development Authority

Tallassee Industrial Development Board

Autauga County Industrial Development Board

Millbrook, Montgomery, Prattville, Tallassee, and Wetumpka Chambers of Commerce

Regional Partners & Resources:

- Alabama Power
- Alabama Gas Company
- Bellsouth
- Regional Water Authorities and Systems
- Central Alabama Aging Consortium
- Central Alabama Electric Cooperative

State & Federal Agencies:

- Alabama Development Office
- Alabama Department of Economic & Community Affairs
- Economic Development Authority

Private Partners & Resources:

- Hyundai
- Madix
- GKN Westland Aerospace
- Neptune
- Trail of Legends Association

III. VISION: WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

A. Vision Statement

The Central Alabama Region will be a cooperative and unified region offering facilities, services and opportunities that can maintain a stable and prosperous population through a diverse economy while becoming a destination for visitors.

B. Goals and Strategies

The recommended goals and strategies for regional economic development in the Central Alabama Region include:

GOAL 1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Create a cooperative system of regional economic development with strong regional markets and diverse regional economy that fosters job creation, increased prosperity, entrepreneurship, tourism, knowledge-based industry, industrial development recruitment, international trade and business retention, and expansion.

- New Industry / Industrial Recruitment / More Automotive-Related Businesses / Development of Sites
- Technology / Knowledge Based Industry / Research and Development / Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM), Troy State University, Alabama State University
- Emerging Business and Entrepreneurial Development
- Existing Business Retention and Expansion
- Increased Minority / Women-Owned Business
- Tourism, Retiree Attraction and Retail Development
- Increased International Trade
- City Center and Community Revitalization / Community Business District Revitalization
- Redevelopment / Re-use of Abandoned Sites

STRATEGIES:

- Capitalize on automotive-related businesses promoting the I-65 and I-85 corridors as prime locations for the automotive industry.
- Develop sources of funds for emerging businesses.
- Support expansion and retention of existing industry / preserve manufacturing jobs.
- Locate and secure new industry / support the planning and development of new industrial and commercial parks and sites in the region.

- Conduct “skills up-training” for public officials and economic development staff to help them create better marketing skills.
- Implement a regional Brownfield’s Identification and Redevelopment Program.
- Market the region as a destination for businesses, visitors, and new residents, including:
 - Inventory potential visitor destinations and events in the region with the assistance of the Montgomery Visitor’s and Convention Bureau, Local Chambers of Commerce (i.e. Prattville, Millbrook, Wetumpka, Tallassee) and the Alabama Department of Travel & Tourism;
 - Use this information to design and implement a marketing program for the region;
 - Inventory existing job training and education capabilities and match needs with available programs and design programs needed;
 - Focus on retention and growth of existing businesses as a region;
 - Perform a strategic development assessment of infrastructure, etc.
- Develop GIS / Regional Information System and coordinate with state, local and quasi-public organizations.
- Implement information technology plan to include fiber optics, GIS, etc.

GOAL 2: EDUCATION

Develop a seamless educational program that encompasses K-12 and post-secondary education as well as workforce development, vocational training, and lifelong learning. This program should be aimed at effectively prepare the Region’s citizens to be productive members of society and provide an educated workforce that is attractive to existing, as well as, potential business and industry.

- Workforce Education and Training
- Access to Jobs
- Upgrade of K-12 and Post Secondary Education

STRATEGIES:

- Implement a regional workforce investment strategy.
- Develop transportation alternatives for access to jobs.
- Support tax reform (not necessarily tax increases) as a solution to the education funding crisis.
- Increase the participation of the region’s universities and vocational schools in the cultural, educational, and technological life of the region.
- Building direct links to the communities by sustained fieldwork / summer camps for low to moderate-income youth in technology, health care, manufacturing careers, etc.
- Improve educational facilities and programs for K-12, universities, and workforce development.

- Coordinate vocational and technical training curriculums with the needs of business and industry.
- Forge partnerships between schools and regional businesses.
- Adopt rigorous internationally benchmarked academic standards and assessments for schools.
- Initiate public education programs that inform the public of the need for additional revenues required to make the Region's educational system competitive on an international basis.
- Develop parent education programs that motivate parents to keep their children in school.
- Formulate integrated strategies to attract, prepare, retain, and support the continued professional development of teachers, administrators and other educators.
- Provide all educational facilities with the most current technology to enhance the learning experience and output.

GOAL 3: INFRASTRUCTURE

Provide cost-effective multi-modal transportation and public infrastructure systems that supports smart growth and sustainability in an effort to promote quality economic development for the region.

- Multi-Modal Transportation System / Urban and Non-Urban
- Improved Highway Access and Reduced Congestion
- Public Transportation in Urban and Rural Areas
- Improvements to Region's Airports
- Develop Alternative Modes for Transportation / Bike, Pedestrian, Greenways
- Cost Effective Water and Sewer Infrastructure to Meet Development and Conservation Needs
- Region-Wide Telecommunications Access / Technology Industry Support

STRATEGIES:

- Regional water study and provisions to assure water supply will meet demands.
- Develop a regional transportation plan that identifies and prioritizes transportation needs and potential funding sources.
- Provide job access transportation.
- Provide adequate sewer services to the region.
- Implement regional telecommunication plans.
- Provide adequate water supply in the region by planning for additional water production facilities, developing water system interconnections, enhancing water storage capacity and coordinating planning efforts to gauge future water capacity needs.

- Maintain existing sanitary sewer facilities. Provide sanitary sewer to rural areas as feasible to eliminate problems with failing septic tanks. Develop sanitary sewer facility plans to determine future needs and capacity approach.
- Provide fiber-optic services capable of providing low cost video, high-speed data, e-government, e-business and Internet service to rural areas and educational facilities.

GOAL 4: ENVIRONMENT

Promote and protect environmental quality and the conservation of natural resources while recognizing that the value of quality of life in the region is vital to retention and attraction of business and industry.

- Meet Clean Air and Clean Water Standards (Partners for Clean Air Standards, Clean Water Partnership)
- Conservation of Important Natural Resources / Land / Forestry / Wildlife/Waterways
- Preserve Major Open Spaces for Public Use / Access
- Town Center / Community Revitalization / Redevelopment and In-fill

STRATEGIES:

- Develop a Regional Natural Resources Master Plan to serve as a regional framework for growth that preserves, protects, and enhances the region's environment and quality of life.
- Protect and preserve region's natural beauty and resources to include watershed management planning for river basins in the region.
- Develop Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Plans.
- Preserve and protect the historic sites and cultural heritage of the region.
- Encourage Adaptive Reuse of Existing Facilities.

GOAL 5: QUALITY OF LIFE

Provide a high quality of life and community resources to the residents of the region.

- Affordable Housing in Multi-Purpose Neighborhoods / Communities
- Access to Health Care / Healthy Communities
- Safe Communities (Police, Fire, Homeland Security, Hazard Mitigation)
- Access to Art, Culture, and Recreational Services / Facilities
- Family / Seniors / Children Support

STRATEGIES:

- Assist local governments in acquiring state and federal funds for recreational expansion and improvements in the Region.

- Acquire additional open space and recreation sites that accommodate region's passive recreation needs.
- Work with public health agencies, hospitals and others to provide access to health care.
- Implement safe community / healthy community programs.

GOAL 6: FUNDING AND LEADERSHIP

Provide funding resources and community leadership for the region.

- Financing for Industrial Development
- Funding for Technology Industry / Capital and Emerging Businesses
- Entrepreneurial Support
- Small Business Finance
- Community Leadership Development

STRATEGIES:

- Increase industrial access funding.
- Create pool of funds for competitive economic development projects.
- Expand the Revolving Loan Fund and similar financing for small businesses.
- Attract greater venture capital sources.
- Develop and Support Regional Leadership Training Programs.

GOAL 7: LAND USE PLANNING

Continue regional planning activities and initiatives that support economic development efforts and organizations.

- Regional Planning and Economic Development Strategies / Partnerships
- Consistent Community Planning for Land Use
- Greater Legislative Support / Federal and State
- Effective Business Licensing / Permitting
- Comprehensive Information for Regional Planning and Development
- Training / Preparedness of communities leaders for planning implementation and economic development recruitment

STRATEGIES:

- Implement CEDS / Regional Partnership
- Develop a regional land-use plan that combines land-use decisions with transportation plans.
- Develop a plan for expected growth resulting from the completion of the Northern and Southern Outer Loops.

- Support Transportation planning for the Montgomery Metro Area and the Region (including efforts for transit, long-range transportation plans and rural transportation).
- Support Alabama Communities of Excellence and Regional Main Street Programs.
- Continue to promote and provide comprehensive planning services including community special needs plans, capital improvements plans, policy development plans, zoning and subdivision regulations to governments and assist them in identifying and acquiring available funding for these services.